

VZCZCXR06852

PP RUEHDBU RUEHFL RUEHKW RUEHLA RUEHROV RUEHSR

DE RUEHIT #0692 2121221

ZNY CCCCC ZZH

P 311221Z JUL 07

FM AMCONSUL ISTANBUL

TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 7351

INFO RUEHZL/EUROPEAN POLITICAL COLLECTIVE PRIORITY

RUEKJCS/DIA WASHDC PRIORITY

RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC PRIORITY

RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC PRIORITY

RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L ISTANBUL 000692

SIPDIS

SIPDIS

DEPARTMENT FOR EUR/SE

E.O. 12958: DECL: 07/31/2017

TAGS: PGOV PREL PREF TU IZ JO SY

SUBJECT: TURKEY'S SPECIAL ENVOY FOR IRAQ BRIEFS STAFFDEL
GROVE

Classified By: Acting Principal Officer Sandra Oudkirk for reasons 1.4
(b) and (d).

¶1. (C) GOT Special Envoy for Iraq Ambassador Oguz Celikkol told staffers that Sunnis in Iraq tell Turkey they feel excluded from decision-making; absent consensus-based decisions in Iraq, the community or communities feeling left out will forcefully resist. He reported great Saudi discomfort with the Sunni sense of isolation. Nothing functions, he said. Iraq needed the participation of all groups but there is no history of democracy and there is currently no consensus-building process. A faction feeling powerful demands more and the Sunnis feel like losers.

¶2. (C) Iraq's other neighbors tell Turkey that the U.S. has the responsibility to "make things right." Celikkol said the U.S. should be more firm with Iraqi factions. The factions depend on the U.S. and so the U.S. is in a unique position to pressure these groups. Neighboring countries can play a role. Turkey is trying to influence the Sunnis, but U.S. pressure can be decisive. Besides, he said, Iraqis are more dependent on the U.S. than the U.S. on Iraqi factions. Many Arab nations have "reservations" with respect to the Shia but it seemed the U.S. was not applying much pressure to the Shia. Celikkol hoped Iran saw that division in Iraq would be very damaging for everyone.

¶3. (C) Ambassador Celikkol reported there were at least 1.6 million Iraqi refugees - some coming and going - into Syria and Jordan. Syria, which received about one million, is badly stretched in offering services to the refugees. Providing education for Iraqi children and fuel subsidies, particularly for diesel, is especially difficult for Syria. Petty crime is increasing in Syria as wealthy refugees give way to a much poorer class. Baathist ideology will prevent the regime from imposing a visa requirement. Iraqi Christians are also making their way to Syria. Celikkol also noted some 700 Christian refugees in Istanbul. It is impossible to know a precise number since many Iraqi refugees blend into Istanbul or Ankara seeking unregistered employment.

¶4. (C) Celikkol told the staffdel members Turkey had delivered a message for the U.S. regarding foreign fighters traversing Syria en route to Iraq. Damascus told Turkey they make transit by Arabs difficult. Bureaucratic measures at airports in Damascus and Aleppo curb use by men under 30. On the other hand, Iraqi authorities say the land border is difficult to control and that the "border is very open." Staffdel member Paul Grove asked Ambassador Celikkol if Syria would close the border should refugees increase significantly. Celikkol did not know.

¶5. (C) Celikkol told staffdel no one in the region can believe the Americans would actually withdraw from Iraq. After all, he said, energy security and the security of Israel are very much related to Iraq. In Celikkol's mind, the Sunnis presented the greatest problem should Iraq become a divided state. In that case, Celikkol advised that Al Qaeda would grow very strong, a situation "we must prevent."

¶6. (U) Staffdel Grove did not have the opportunity to clear this cable.

OUDKIRK